

**WELCOME REMARKS FOR DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER OF
MAHARASHTRA SHRI DEVENDRA FADNAVIS
BY AMBASSADOR OF INDIA TO JAPAN SHRI SIBI GEORGE
AT EMBASSY OF INDIA, TOKYO ON AUGUST 23, 2023**

Good Evening and Welcome.

Sir, Today is an important day in our nation's history. We will soon be celebrating the successful landing of Chandrayan 3 on the moon. Let's all begin with expressing our gratitude for our scientists who made this happen.

Sir, It is with great happiness that we welcome you to Japan and to the Embassy.

Sir, someone who has travelled to Japan multiple times, you are fully aware of the importance and the depth of our relationship with Japan. Over a period of few years, our relationship has transformed from a G to G to B to B to a special strategic and global partnership. The special strategic and global partnership set up by PM Shri Modi and PM Abe is now reinforced by PM Modi and PM Kishida.

Sir, You have personally and Maharashtra as a State played an important role in developing the partnership with Japan. Your visit in 2014 was indeed very successful. When you established a State-to-State relationship with Wakayama. Your meetings with political and business leadership is indeed helpful in further building our relationship. I would like to mention the announcement of Koyoson University to confer Honorary D Litt on you as a matter of great pride for all Indians in Japan. I thank the University for their decision.

Sir, In this transformation, in our partnership, our Indian diaspora in Japan, which is small but dynamic, have played an important role. They always been with us to celebrate India and Indian festivals almost every day in Japan. They have contributed in our Aatmanirbhar Bharat and now in the march towards Amrit Kaal, India @2047 that PM Modi announced. This year we are celebrating the India Japan Year of Tourism with the theme Connecting Himalayas with Mount Fuji.

Sir, it has been eight months since I assumed charge in Japan, during which I have been able to travel the length and breadth of Japan, covering several prefectures and major cities. What I have witnessed during these interactions is a real momentum, an overwhelming enthusiasm, a spirit of partnership towards building a relationship with India. What we should be able to do is to convert this momentum to concrete outcome. We have a long way to go. We need to have a quantum leap in our engagement. There are 1500 Japanese companies in India, my target is to make it 15,000. In this journey, Maharashtra plays a very important role, including the place where India's first bullet train will operate.

Sir, on behalf of the Indian Community in Japan, I once again welcome you to Japan.

Sir, I may I request you to kindly address this august gathering.

Thank you.
